

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The Official Action objects to the disclosure for the failure to include section headings. Please note that applicants have provided the appropriate specification amendments to overcome this objection, the reconsideration and withdrawal of which are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 1 and 3 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over MCCLELLAN et al. in view of BIRCH et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

MCCLELLAN et al. is offered as providing a decoder provided with modules and automatic recognition means of the modules, as well as switching means of flux to interchange the movement through the modules.

It is respectfully suggested that the characteristics of the present invention, particularly as manifest in the amended claims, that relate to the fact that the modules of the present application are physical means which have an equivalent format and which can be inserted in a connector, finds neither teaching nor suggestion in either of the applied references.

MCCLELLAN et al. provides a top box set with different components for both decoding and demultiplexing. According to MCCLELLAN et al., "modules" are used, but this term is used in

the sense of software (See, e.g., claim 1 "module of code" and the description, in column 4, lines 39-59, where there is described a procedure for remote loading of the (software) modules).

As a result, it is respectfully suggested that the modules of MCCLELLAN et al. are in no way related to the modules of the present invention, which comprises elements having a physical support and that can be inserted removably in the connectors.

MCCLELLAN et al. provides, parallel to the modules, connectors, of which one is of the PCMCIA format and the other of the RS232 series. These connectors are used solely for the connection of external support devices for data, such as that described in column 9, line 34.

It will be noted that it follows obviously from MCCLELLAN et al. that the two considered connectors (PCMCIA and RS232) do not permit the connection of modules having similar formats and that therefore these connectors present no concern of potential error on the part of the user by creating an improper connection.

As to the flux switching means, applicants have not found such means in the MCCLELLAN et al. reference.

Thus, according to MCCLELLAN et al., the PCMCIA and RS232 connections are solely utilized to connect a support device for external data permitting associating modules of the software

type usable in a centralized fashion in the CPU (Central Processing Unit).

This central processing operates for example as described in column 9, lines 17-45, where it is clearly indicated that the modules serve only as data supports usable by the CPU. This type of processing poses no problem of switching flux.

Applicants, in a similar manner, have not found any passage of flux in the devices which might be connected by the PCMCIA and RS232 connectors described by the MCCLELLAN et al. reference.

The present invention as now claimed is believed to be nonobvious over the applied references, at least by virtue of the following recited features:

- the recited modules are physical modules connected in a removable manner to the device,
- the modules and the connectors have a similar physical format,
- the modules (here the physical device) have an active role in the processing of the flux which passes through the modules,
- the presence of switching means to orient the flux in one and another of the modules.

Given these differences, it will be seen that the recited invention serves to solve a general problem. This problem consists essentially in permitting the connection of

modules having a similar format (which can confuse the user) in any one of the connectors present on the principal device of the Set Top Box type.

For example, the modules could be cards utilizing the PCMCIA standard, but with different formations or different versions of standards.

In the view of applicants, the solution proposed by the present invention does not result from a combination of the MCCLELLAN et al. and BIRCH et al. references.

MCCLELLAN et al. thus does not solve a connection problem of external modules having a similar format. On the contrary, the formats of the MCCLELLAN et al. connectors are very different from each other (PCMCIA, and RS232).

Thus, even if one skilled in the art were seeking to solve this problem of undifferentiated connection of the modules, access to and knowledge of the applied references would not guide such person to produce the invention of the present claims. This is particularly so because neither flux flow through the modules connected in the connectors, nor any switching means of this flux, is disclosed by MCCLELLAN et al.

Moreover, one skilled in the art would not have found the necessary supplemental teachings in the BIRCH et al. patent which, even though it is found in the field of digital television, discloses only elementary components of a decoder for the reception of digital television signals and their processing.

Thus, BIRCH et al. fails to overcome the shortcomings of MCCLELLAN et al. related either to the recognition of different modules, or to switching the entering or exiting fluxes in these modules.

As a result, even if one skilled in the art considered both of the applied references, he would not have produced a device having different modules through which the flux flows and having switching means for the flux to orient it as a matter of priority toward one or the other of the modules.

For all of the reasons provided above, applicants respectfully suggest that the applied references, considered either independently or collective, fail to render obvious the present invention, in particular as it is now claimed.

The Official Action rejects claim 2 under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over the references applied above in further view of Application-Specific Integrated Circuits by Micheal John Sebastian SMITH. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

The Official Action offers the additional SMITH reference merely for its asserted teaching that an ASIC can act as a microprocessor that can recognize when peripheral modules are inserted.

Irrespective of the ability of this reference to teach or suggest that for which it is particularly offered, it

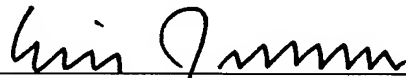
nevertheless fails to overcome the shortcomings of the MCCLELLAN et al. and BIRCH et al. references for the specific reasons identified above in the previous obviousness rejection.

In light of the amendments described above and the arguments offered in support thereof, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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